

# ***IOWA OUTDOORS***

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

**[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)**

**Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653**

**[mick.klemesrud@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:mick.klemesrud@dnr.iowa.gov)**

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## **FOR WISCONSIN SCHOOL TEACHER, NORTH IOWA IS PHEASANT HUNTING PARADISE**

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Rick Seume has a hectic schedule. On week days you'll find him standing at the front of a classroom, teaching chemistry or biology to students of the Webster, Wisconsin high school.

But if anyone wants to touch base with Seume on a Saturday morning, they'll most likely have to travel to the tawny bird covers of northern Iowa. That's where this Wisconsin school teacher spends his fall and winter weekends, carefully following the nose of a well trained bird dog in quest of the ever popular, ever elusive rooster pheasant.

Ask him how the bird hunting is going this season, and Seume nearly explodes with enthusiasm.

"The habitat is in really great shape this fall and, so far, I'm finding about the same number of birds as last year which is really good," says Sueme.

"I've been coming down to Iowa for twelve years now and have gotten to know a lot of farmers. Getting permission to hunt hasn't been a problem and the people are really great. Over the years, I've gotten to know some of the local farmers pretty well and have become good friends with many of them. To me, that's great."

Although Seume spends a good part of the early season tromping private lands, his attentions may turn toward public areas as winter arrives.

“Iowa’s public lands are incredible,” says Seume. “The habitat is good. There’s room to do all the walking you want, and we always seem to see a lot of birds. I keep coming down [to Iowa] for the entire season and it usually seems to get better and better the later you go. Hunting pressure usually goes way down and the birds really pack into the thick [public] areas once the weather gets tough.”

When I crossed trails with Seume early Monday morning, he had just finished walking a fog bound chunk of low lying private grassland north of Clear Lake. As is normally the case in foggy weather, the birds were skittish with several pheasants flushing wild. One rooster, however, had made the fatal mistake of sitting too tight for too long.

Seume admired the plump bird’s plumage as he slowly and respectfully rolled it in his hand. The day was young. One rooster down. Two to go.

“The pheasant hunting down here is really spectacular,” said Seume. “We’re starting to get better [pheasant] numbers back home, but it will never be anything like you have down here [in Iowa].”

So how did a Wisconsin high school teacher get to hunt ring-necked pheasants in Iowa on a Monday morning? The answer was simple.

“Actually, I’m on vacation for the whole week,” grinned Seume. “The Wisconsin deer season opened last Saturday and everything ---- including the public schools ---- just shut down for the entire week.”

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## **NOVEMBER ANTLERLESS SEASON IS A FINE OPPORTUNITY FOR HUNTERS**

Friday marks the start of the three day long November Antlerless Season in Iowa. Geared around the Thanksgiving holiday, this season offers an opportunity for family and friends to hunt together, harvest some quality venison, and help manage Iowa’s deer herd.

Licenses went on sale November 10 for counties that had not filled their antlerless license quota. Shotguns, handguns, muzzleloaders, and bows may be used and party hunting is legal. Last year roughly 11,500 licenses were issued with a reported kill of 4,141 deer for a harvest success of 35 percent. These animals represent a positive step towards attaining or maintaining herd goals within the state.

The majority of southern and eastern Iowa herds are still above desired levels and antlerless harvest in these areas, especially adult does and doe fawns, is the only realistic long-term method for reducing population size. Deer herds with reduced densities typically produce higher quality animals, help alleviate crop depredation, and reduce the rate of automobile/deer collisions.

Hunting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. All deer harvested must be reported using the harvest reporting system by midnight following the day the deer is recovered. This is the second year where hunters have reported their kill. They can call the toll free number (1-800-771-4692) or use the DNR website ([www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)) to report their kill. This year they can also report at the license vendor. For hunters with Internet access, online reporting of the harvest is probably the easiest way to register the deer. Harvest reports are a vital piece of information Iowa DNR biologists need for properly managing Iowa's deer population and hunting opportunities. Hunters are also reminded that they can also utilize the HUSH program to donate deer to the Iowa Food Bank and provide needed meat for Iowans.

Other individuals interested in purchasing antlerless licenses for other hunting seasons should act now in many counties to avoid losing the opportunity. It is also a good time to purchase licenses for one of the Shotgun Seasons to avoid the long lines and holdups that are inevitable for those who wait until the last minute.

**For more information, contact Tom Litchfield, state deer biologist, at 641-774-2958.**

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## **DNR VOLUNTEERS HONORED FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT**

DES MOINES — Accustomed to slogging through rivers and pulling weeds from prairies, Iowa volunteers were surrounded by the beauty of Jester Park in Polk County during a recognition event recently – a perfect setting to honor their hard work.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources hosted the sixth annual Volunteers in Natural Resources Awards Banquet. Volunteers and guests from across the state gathered at the Jester Park Lodge for lunch, presentations about mountain lions and the emerald ash borer, an awards ceremony and the opportunity to share their volunteer achievements with each other.

The banquet, entitled “Leaving a Legacy,” recognized the more than 108,000 citizens who volunteered with the DNR's Keepers of the Land Volunteer program last year.

Donating more than 157,000 hours of service, the volunteers included an eagle scout who built trails, friends groups committed to state park improvements, instructors who help Iowans enjoy safe fishing and hunting, and weekend warriors who plant trees, clean-up rivers, burn prairies and more.

“A successful Iowa is one in which everyone with different backgrounds and ideas lock arms and work for the common good,” noted a letter from Governor Chet Culver and Lt. Governor Patty Judge that was read to volunteers. “As volunteers you play a vital role in achieving this goal.”

The Keepers of the Land program handed out awards to outstanding volunteers in six categories.

DNR staff Ron Andrews, non-game biologist, and Randy Cook, state urban forester, provided volunteers updates on mountain lions and the emerald ash borer, respectively, and how these species are impacting Iowa natural resource management.

For many volunteers who were honored, the ceremony and all of the kudos passed their way is a bit overwhelming.

“It’s always nice to be recognized,” said John Carlson, who was honored for service, provided to the National Archery in the Schools Program, “but that’s never on my mind when I volunteer. It’s fun to work with the kids and I truly enjoy every minute of it.”

Groups and individuals from across the state took home Keepers of the Land awards:

- Jacob Jacobi, of Des Moines, earned the Outstanding Youth Volunteer Award for his Eagle Scout project that created a new lake access trail at Big Creek State Park.
- Duane Fisher, of Pacific Junction, earned the Outstanding Individual Volunteer Award for his work in forming the Friends of Folsom Lake and ensuring increased public enjoyment of the Folsom Wildlife Area.
- Story City Trees Forever earned the Outstanding Group Volunteer Award for their service and dedication to the beautification and ongoing management of Story City’s natural landscape.
- Members of the Friends of Lake Darling, of Brighton, earned the Outstanding Large Project Volunteer Award for their vision and determination in bringing a four-season, day use lodge complex to Lake Darling State Park.

- Dave Sunne, Park Ranger for Backbone State Park of Dundee, earned the Outstanding DNR Staff Award for his support and assistance given to volunteers of the Backbone Lake Friends Group.

All the award winners, nominees and guests heard about new opportunities and services offered by the Keepers of the Land program. Director Merry Rankin told the assembled volunteers about new short-term opportunities, an on-line events calendar and other ways to find volunteers and volunteer events. See [www.keepersoftheland.org](http://www.keepersoftheland.org) for details.

For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or at [Merry.Rankin@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Merry.Rankin@dnr.iowa.gov)

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